The Practices of Principled Innovation

What is Principled Innovation?

Principled innovation is the ability to imagine new concepts, catalyze ideas, and form new solutions, guided by principles that create positive change for humanity. It carefully considers context and larger systems while placing the people who are affected by the problem at the center of proposed solutions. The question, **"We can innovate, but should we?" places values and ethical understandings - our own character - at the core of the practice.** Through principled innovation, we hold ourselves accountable to design and deliver excellent learning opportunities for all learners, preparing them to be collaborative and ethical contributors to their communities and a thriving civil society.

Four interconnected clusters of character assets - **moral, civic, intellectual,** and **performance** - are developed over one's lifetime through self-reflection, working with others, and learning through experiences. The eight practices of principled innovation are demonstrations of the assets in action. As students, faculty, staff, and community members work collaboratively to innovate and make decisions that affect the lives and learning of others, the practices of principled innovation help ensure that their decisions and actions are meeting the social, cultural, emotional, and educational needs of those affected while creating positive change for humanity.

Moral
- Identify and acknowledge fundamental values
- Utilize moral and ethical decision making

How are we working to consider values that may differ from our own?

How are we considering our own biases and how they affect the decisions we make?

Intellectual
- Develop habits of an informed systems thinker
- Reflect critically and compassionately

What data, resources, and learning are supporting our decisions?

When are we taking time to reflect and make adjustments based on our reflections?

Practices of Principled Innovation

Civic
- Understand culture and context
- Engage multiple and diverse perspectives

Whose perspectives different from our own are we soliciting?

What steps are we taking to understand our students' culture and context?

Performance
- Design creative solutions
- Navigate uncertainty and mitigate consequences

What steps have we taken to consider the consequences of our actions?

What solutions have we designed that better meet student needs?

The **eight practices of principled innovation** are demonstrations of the assets in action.

Moral

Guides decision-making with open-mindedness, integrity, and justice

- **Identify and acknowledge fundamental values.**
  Distinguish the values that are important to the individuals, team, community and learning environment and ensure that the process, structures, and solutions honor, appreciate, and reflect the identified values.

- **Utilize moral and ethical decision making.**
  Use a values-informed reflective process to assess possibilities, navigate dilemmas, and make the best possible choice to serve the needs of the individual, team, community and learning environment.

Civic

Supports collaboration to address systemic problems for the public good

- **Understand culture and context.**
  Use evidence-based resources, empathy, reflective questioning, and asset-based appreciative inquiry to fully understand and assess the lived and current experiences and circumstances of individuals, communities, and learning environments.

- **Engage multiple and diverse perspectives.**
  Seek and champion equitable and inclusive involvement and contribution to the process, including many different voices who have a variety of lived experiences, beliefs, backgrounds, and cultural wealth.

Intellectual

Informs problem-solving by combining creativity, evidence, and critical thinking

- **Develop habits of an informed systems thinker.**
  Use evidence-based resources and data to inform flexible thinking and appreciation of emerging insights and multiple perspectives, allowing one to recognize how the individual parts are influenced by their environment and interact to form a complex whole.

- **Reflect critically and compassionately.**
  Use a growth mindset to make meaning of experiences through contemplation and consideration of one's thoughts, feelings, and actions and how they affect the growth, development, and identity of the individual, team, community, and learning environment.

Performance

Enables navigation of uncertainty with initiative, courage, and resilience

- **Design creative solutions.**
  Work collaboratively and intentionally for and with the community to define and understand the problem; then generate and catalyze purposeful, innovative ideas to achieve a desired outcome that creates positive change for humanity.

- **Navigate uncertainty and mitigate consequences.**
  Guide the decision-making process through observation and reflective questioning that helps to imagine and effectively respond to the possible outcomes. Allow space for meaningful action to increase the chance for desired results and reduce the risk of harm to individuals, teams, communities, and learning environments.